

February 2, 2010

RE: Family and Human Services Committee  
Senate Bill No. 197

No one in my family has been able to see, talk to, or even know if my grand-daughter is alive and well or not for nearly three and a half years!!!

When my grand-daughter was two months old, her mother (of her own free will) came to my son and told him he was the father. DNA testing proved that to be true and "mother" immediately started allowing visitation. After a few months however, she suddenly changed her mind and decided she didn't want the biological father to have a part in his daughters' life after all and denied visitation. That was not acceptable so court proceedings and The Friend of the Court awarded legal visitation and child support and typical visitation rights followed. This went on for nearly four years with the mother taking my son back to court several times with several different lawyers but the court always upheld the prior decision until that fateful day in October of 2006 when she finally found yet another lawyer and once again went to court equipped this time with an antiquated Michigan Paternity Law on their side and after nearly four years of having this beautiful, loving child in our lives, she was immediately snatched away!! The mother didn't care what was best for her daughter but instead wanted to avoid people knowing she had born a child by someone other than her husband (which was the situation).

The courts say the law is as it is to conserve the "family". What about "our" family? Our grand-daughter was as much a part of "our" family and certainly loved as much by "our" family. And the even more important thing is she loved her "Daddy" and the rest of us too. That was obvious by her actions and her joy whenever she was with any of us. No one that ever saw her with her "Daddy" would even try to deny that they had a very special connection.

The summer before we lost her, we were on a family camping trip and when it came time to pack up and go home, she cried because she did not want to go home. I told her it was time to go home and see mommy and not to cry and promised her we would go camping again. I have never been able to keep that promise because of what took place soon after. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about that promise and hope and pray someone will allow that promise to come true by doing what is right and changing the law so a case like this can be dealt with on an individual basis the same as custody cases are handled in a divorce situation. There was only one reason for all of this misery. An antiquated and just plain wrong Michigan Law that allows DNA testing to make a father step up and do what's right, but on the other hand says DNA means nothing if a child is conceived and born of a marriage to other than the biological father.

Who's family needs protecting here? One that would do whatever necessary "to" a child to achieve their "own" goals or one that would do anything "for" a child to help "her" achieve "her" goals?

On page (5) of the Senate Bill No. 197, I would highly recommend changes to the following lines (or other wording if thought better to mean the same):

Line 2 A biological relationship between the putative father and the child are proven.

Line 6 The putative father verifies with the court

Line 7 that he is the biological father of the child and that he

Line 9 Each individual described in

Line 10 subsection (1) (D) is made aware of the putative fathers' intent.



Connie S Podolak



Robert M Podolak